THE

# RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

# MAGAZINE.

Sow in the morn thy seed,
  At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
  Broad-cast it o'er the land.

Beside all waters sow,
  The highway furrows stock,
Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
  Scatter it on the rock.

And duly shall appear,
  In verdure, beauty, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
  And the full corn at length.

Thou canst not toil in vain,
  Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
  For garners in the sky.

Thence when the glorious end,
  The day of God is come,
The reapers shall descend,
  And heaven cry, Harvest-home.

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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

# TO OUR READERS.

THROUGH the goodness of our Heavenly Father, this Magazine (having completed twenty-one years of its existence) has "come of age." Whilst taking a retrospect of the great social crusade in which we have been so many years engaged, we cannot but express our gratitude to the Source of all Good, that we have been spared to see the pigmy attain the stature of a giant, and thus that Ragged Schools, which were once regarded as a dream of religious fanaticism, are now recognised as the best means of coping with the vice and woe of our great cities.

Nor do Ragged Schools show any symptoms of that decrepitude and weariness which is common to age. For example, our scholars increased 2,000 last year, and no less than seventy new operations were added to the affiliated Schools. It is true that our expectations may be somewhat modified by experience; for we now know what we *cannot* do, as well as what we *can* do. But when we see how many goodly sheaves have during the past twenty-one years been gathered into the great garner of God, we have every incentive to pursue our labour with that increased earnestness which so great a work imperatively demands.

In many ways our Magazine has promoted the interest of those who were once almost "ready to perish." Many of our articles have been reprinted by popular magazines, and thus they have penetrated into quarters which our pens could not otherwise have reached. Sums of money, large in the aggregate, have been contributed to languishing Ragged Schools through appeals published in these pages. Above all, fainting workers have, through the sketches and illustrative cases which we have published, had their courage renewed for their great battle with social sin and misery. In this and many other ways the interest of the public in Ragged Schools has not only been kept alive but deepened.

We have never confined our labours to the London Ragged Schools, but have gladly opened our pages to sketches of similar Schools in the provinces and elsewhere. Thus, during the past year our readers were made acquainted with the working of Ragged Schools, not only in Ireland and provincial towns, but on the Continent, and even in Asiatic cities. This year, we were glad to record that our plan had been introduced into Spain, and thus many who were steeped to the lips in Mariolatry, have learnt the great Bible truth—that the blood of Christ is the only Purgatory.

During the past year Ragged and Sunday Schools were much agitated by parochial taxation—in other words, by *fines* for voluntarily helping the public to keep down crime. The whole forces of Ragged and Sunday Schools were however brought to bear against this impost, and, after a short but sharp struggle, Parliament has declared that such taxes ought not to be levied.

It only remains for us to say, that twenty-one years' experience has confirmed our original principle—namely, that the gospel, and not secular education, is the sole panacea for those social evils which threaten to engulf society in ruin. The day may be still far off when Ragged Schools will be no longer needed, through the extinction of the classes for whose social and spiritual reclamation they were devised; and we may have to pass through a terrible struggle with the combined power of evil before that happy day arrives. Yet still we believe that the prayer taught by Christ includes a prophecy, and thus that God's kingdom *will* come, and that His will eventually shall "be done on earth as it is in heaven."

THE EDITOR.

1, EXETER HALL, *December 1st*, 1869.

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